

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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July 24, 2020

Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa
Office of the Governor
Iowa State Capitol
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Governor Reynolds,

I am writing to express my serious concern regarding recent reports that the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) significantly underreported the number of COVID-19 cases in the Tyson pork processing plant outbreak in Columbus Junction earlier this year. On May 5, 2020, the IDPH confirmed 221 positive COVID-19 cases at the plant, however recent reports indicate that Tyson officials had reported 522 positive cases to the state prior to the May 5th announcement.

The employees working at these plants play a critical role in maintaining the stability of our nation's food supply and agricultural sector. I am deeply concerned that by concealing information about the true extent of the virus' spread, the IDPH only served to further risk the health and safety of these essential workers, and in doing so, the health and safety of their families and the entire surrounding community. Our communities must have access to the most accurate, up-to-date information available in order to take the correct steps necessary to slow the spread of the virus and protect as many individuals as possible from contracting this disease.

I respectfully request that your office provide mine with answers to the following questions:

1. On what date were IDPH officials made aware that there were 522 positive COVID-19 cases at the Tyson plant in Columbus Junction?
2. Have any individuals responsible for the misinformation been held responsible?
3. What remedies have been put in place to ensure that outdated or inaccurate numbers will not be reported again?
4. Will your administration ensure that all information regarding outbreaks at meat processing facilities is fully accurate, up-to-date, and available to the public on coronavirus.iowa.gov?
5. It has been reported that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offered on-site assistance on multiple occasions, and assistance was declined in both instances. What data did your administration consult to make these determinations, and what assistance was being offered that you deemed unnecessary?

Iowans deserve access to the truth about the presence of this virus in their communities and their places of work. Concealing this important and necessary information will only put more Iowans at risk and prolong the duration of this pandemic. Thank you, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Loebsack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dave Loebsack
Iowa's Second District